DC
BATMAN
20c
NO. 251
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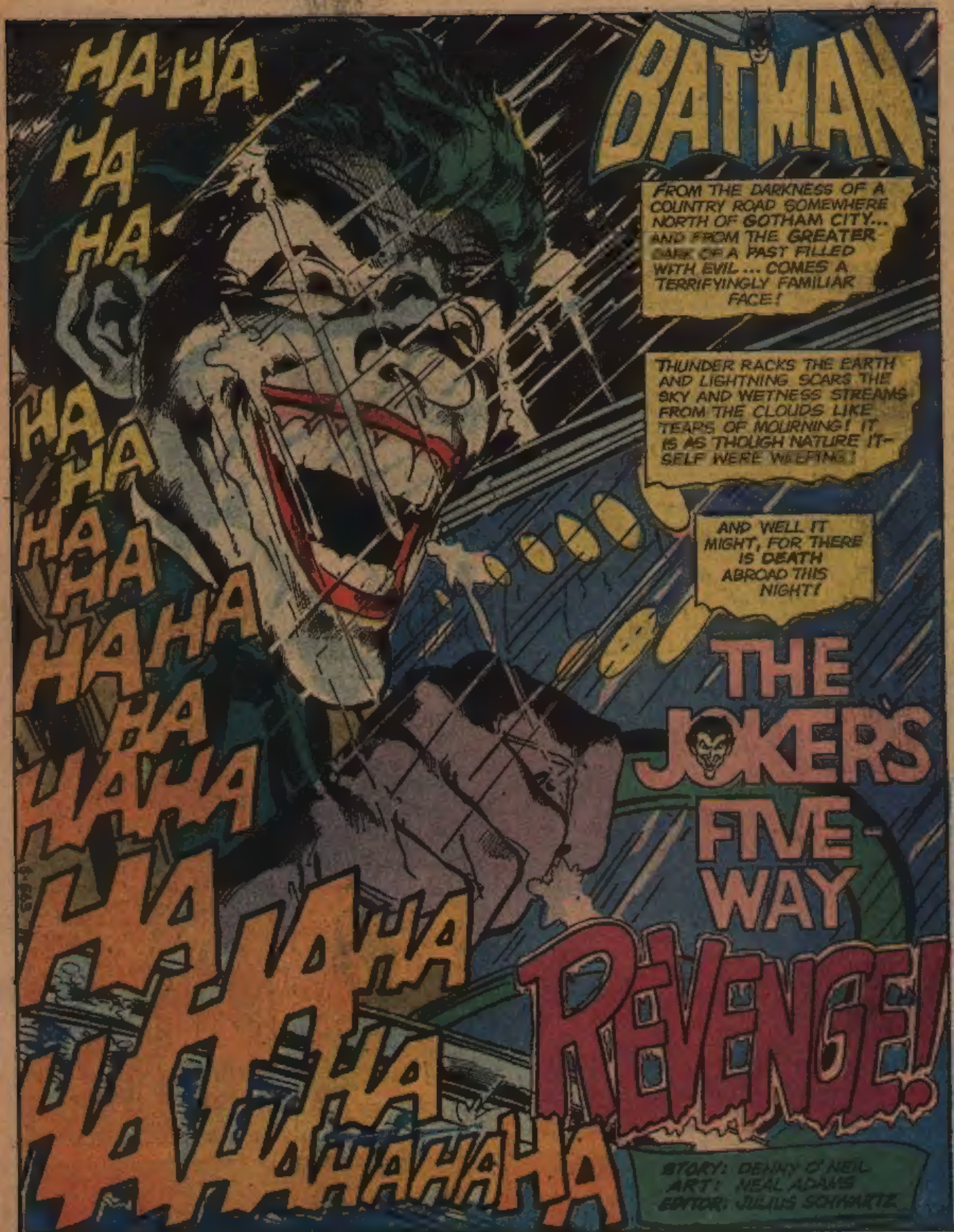
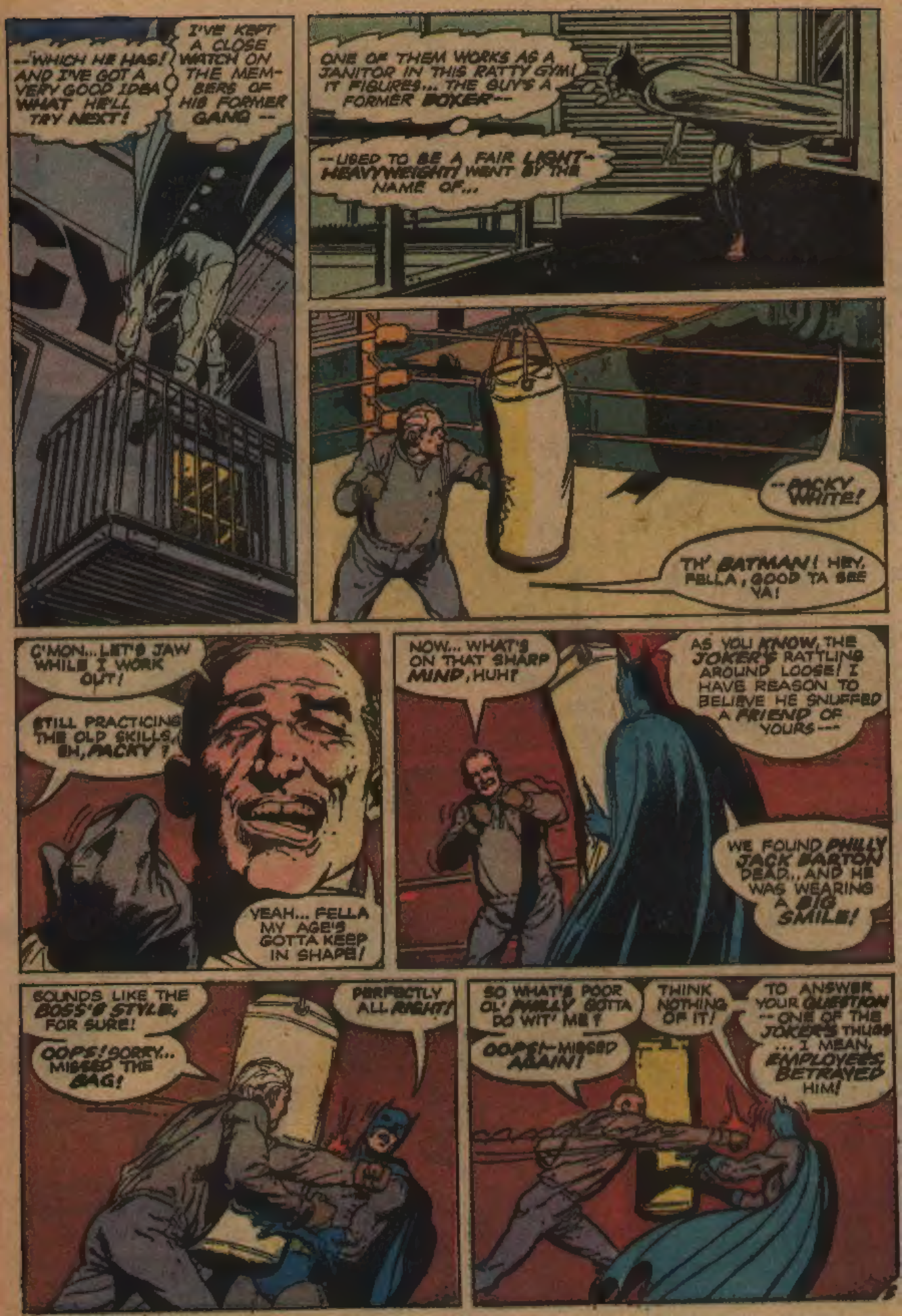
30430
BAT MAN
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
HA HA HA
HA HA HA
A
LOOK OUT, GOTHAM!
THE JOKER'S BACK IN TOWN!


HA HA HA

IT IS NEARING ELEVEN O'CLOCK WHEN POLICE COMMISSIONER GORDON ANSWERS A SUMMONS TO A LONELY SPOT ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY... AND GAZES AT A HUDDLED FORM SPRAWLED IN THE RAIN-SOAKED MUD...
I'VE SEEN A LOT OF DEAD MEN BEFORE, COMMISSIONER -- BUT NONE LIKE HIM! LOOK AT THE FACE--
YES! TWISTED IN A HIDEOUS GRIN--! GHASTLY!
I WISH THE BATMAN WOULD ARRIVE!
I'M HERE, COMMISSIONER! BEEN HERE FOR TEN MINUTES!
BLAST IT, BATMAN! MUST YOU CONSTANTLY STARTLE ME--?
SORRY, SIR! I WANTED TO EXAMINE THE SCENE UNDISTURBED!
WELL, WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF IT?
I'M AFRAID THERE'S NO QUESTION OF WHO COMMITTED THE CRIME! THE DEAD MAN'S GRIN--
--IT'S THE TRADEMARK OF ONLY ONE CRIMINAL--
...AND TO CLINCH IT, I FOUND THIS NEARBY!
J
A JOKER!
I'LL DETAIL A SQUAD OF MY BEST DETECTIVES IMMEDIATELY AND..
GO AHEAD, COMMISSIONER -- IF IT'LL MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER! BUT I HAVE AN IDEA OFFICIAL METHODS WILL BE TOO SLOW TO PREVENT FURTHER KILLINGS--
SO I'LL BE INVESTIGATING ON MY OWN.
EVER SINCE I HEARD THE JOKER ESCAPED FROM THE STATE HOSPITAL FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE, I'VE BEEN EXPECTING HIM TO SHOW UP--
--BUT THERE WAS NO WAY TO SEARCH FOR HIM IN A CITY OF EIGHT MILLION UNTIL HE MADE A MOVE--


--WHICH HE HAS! AND I'VE GOT A VERY GOOD IDEA WHAT HE'LL TRY NEXT!
I'VE KEPT A CLOSE WATCH ON THE MEMBERS OF HIS FORMER GANG --
ONE OF THEM WORKS AS A JANITOR IN THIS RATTY GYM! IT FIGURES... THE GUY'S A FORMER BOXER--
--USED TO BE A FAIR LIGHT-HEAVYWEIGHT! WENT BY THE NAME OF...
--RACKY WHITE!
TH' BATMAN! HEY, FELLA, GOOD TA SEE YA!
C'MON... LET'S JAW WHILE I WORK OUT!
STILL PRACTICING THE OLD SKILLS, EH, RACKY?
YEAH... FELLA MY AGE'S GOTTA KEEP IN SHAPE!
NOW... WHAT'S ON THAT SHARP MIND, HUH?
AS YOU KNOW, THE JOKER'S RATTLING AROUND LOOSE! I HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE HE SNUFFED A FRIEND OF YOURS---
WE FOUND PHILLY JACK BARTON DEAD... AND HE WAS WEARING A BIG SMILE!
SOUNDS LIKE THE BOSS'S STYLE, FOR SURE!
OOPS! SORRY... MISSED THE BAG!
PERFECTLY ALL RIGHT!
SO WHAT'S POOR OL' PHILLY GOTTA DO WIT' ME?
OOPS!--MISSED AGAIN!
THINK NOTHING OF IT!
TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION --ONE OF THE JOKER'S THUGS ... I MEAN, EMPLOYEES BETRAYED HIM!

WHEN WE FINALLY MAILED HIM, HE SWORE HE'D KILL YOU ALL -- REMEMBER?
CHECK! YA FIGURE HE'LL COME AFTER OL' PACKY?
CORRECT! I'M GUESSING HE'LL SYSTEMATICALLY MURDER EVERY ONE OF YOU! -- UNLESS YOU PLACE YOURSELF UNDER POLICE PROTECTION!
GO TO JAIL WITHOUT BEIN' DRAGGED? NOT THIS PUG--!
I CAN'T FORCE YOU TO COOPERATE, PACKY--
--HOWEVER, YOU JUST MIGHT HAVE A SLIGHT ACCIDENT -- A FIST-TYPE ACCIDENT--
--AND IT JUST MIGHT PUT YOU IN THE HOSPITAL--
--WHERE OFFICERS COULD GUARD YOU UNTIL THE JOKER IS CAUGHT!
YOU CAN SURRENDER YOURSELF--OR WE CAN CONTINUE PLAYING!
YOUR CHOICE, PACKY-- MAKE IT!
CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING
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SEEIN' AS HOW YA PUT IT LIKE THAT ... JAIL AIN'T SUCH A BAD JOINT! I GOT A LOTTA PALS IN THE SLAMMER!-- LONG AS I DON'T HAVETA STAY IN THERE LONG! I BEEN GOIN' STRAIGHT!
BE WITCHA IN A SECOND --/ GOTTA TAKE A DRINK O' WATER... TAKE THE TASTE OF YOUR KNUCKLES OUTA MY MOUTH!
THE MANLY ART OF PUGILISM LOST A CHAMP WHEN YA PUT ON YOUR MASK, FELLA!
YA KNOW, IT'S KINDA FUNNY, YOU-- THE BATMAN --WORRYIN' ABOUT A STRONG-ARM ARTIST LIKE OL' PACKY!
YEAH-- HA-HA- REAL FUNNY--
SO... FUNNY...HA-HA... IT HURTS--
AAAA-GHH--
TOO LATE! HE'S BEEN POISONED! --WITH THE NERVE-TOXIN THE JOKER DEVELOPED--
--THE STUFF THAT CAUSES A PERSON TO LAUGH HIM-SELF TO DEATH!
ROUND ONE GOES TO THE JOKER!

AND UNKNOWN TO THE BATMAN, HIS FOE IS ABOUT TO TAKE THE SECOND ROUND ALSO! FOR, IN A SLEAZY HOTEL ROOM...
I'M S'PRISED TO SEE YA IN GOTHAM! I FIGGERED YA'D WANNA STAY CLEAR OF THE BATMAN!
COSY HOTEL
OH, DEAR ME, NO--
--I FULLY EXPECT HIM TO FIND ME, REGARDLESS OF WHERE I HIDE! I DON'T KNOW HOW... OR WHEN...
...BUT THE CAPED CRUSADER WILL LOCATE ME! HE ALWAYS DOES! HOWEVER, I INTEND TO BE READY FOR HIM!
BY THE WAY, WERE YOU THE ONE WHO BETRAYED ME, ALBY?
M-ME? AW, JOKER, ...I'M YER PAL!
THEN HAVE A CIGAR... PAL!
TRY IT! YOU'LL LIKE IT!
THANKS! MMM ... NOT A BAD SMOKE!
HEY... I BET YOU'RE PULLIN' A GAG ON ME, RIGHT? I BET THIS'S AN EXPLODING CIGAR, RIGHT?
SAME OLD JOKER... ALWAYS WITH THE GAGS! WELL... I CAN GO ALONG WITH A LAUGH! I MEAN, WHAT HARM CAN A LITTLE EXPLODING CIGAR DO, RIGHT?
6

VOOM!!
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
POOR FELLOW! HE GUESSED PART OF MY JOKE! A PITY HE DIDN'T GUESS THAT THE EXPLOSIVE IN THE CIGAR WAS NITROGLYCERIN!
HA HA HA
REST IN PIECES, ALBY!
TEN MINUTES LATER, THE BATMAN HEARS OF ALBY'S ABRUPT DEMISE ON THE POLICE RADIO, AND...
THE JOKER'S MAKING A FOOL OF ME! HE'S ALREADY KILLED THREE OF HIS FIVE EX-GANG MEMBERS...
...THE FOURTH--BIGGER MELVIN--LIVES ON A CONVERTED GARBAGE SCOW IN THE WATERFRONT DISTRICT!
MAYBE--JUST MAYBE--I CAN GET TO HIM FIRST THIS TIME!
SOON, AT BIGGER MELVIN'S LESS-THAN-LAVISH LIVING QUARTERS...
OH, MY GOSH! THE BATMAN--! HE MUSTA FOUND OUT IT WAS ME WHO MUGGED THAT GEEZER IN GOTHAM PARK!
I GOTTA RUN!
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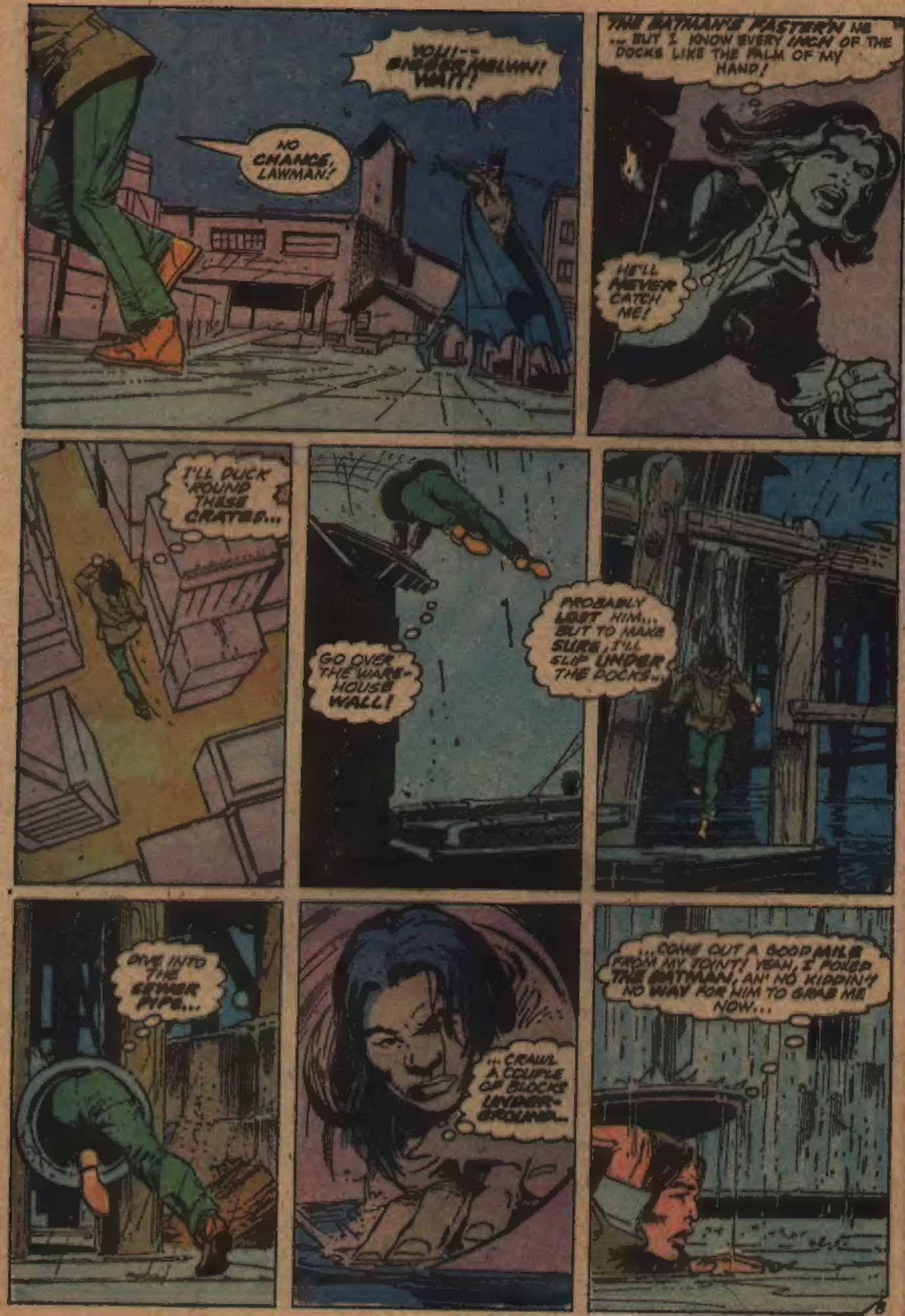
7


YOU!-- BADGER MELVIN! WAIT!
NO CHANCE, LAWMAN!
THE BATMAN'S FASTER'N ME ... BUT I KNOW EVERY INCH OF THE DOCKS LIKE THE PALM OF MY HAND!
HE'LL NEVER CATCH ME!
I'LL DUCK 'ROUND THESE CRATES...
GO OVER THE WARE-HOUSE WALL!
PROBABLY LOST HIM... BUT TO MAKE SURE, I'LL SLIP UNDER THE DOCKS...
DIVE INTO THE SEWER PIPE...
... CRAWL A COUPLE OF BLOCKS UNDER-GROUND...
... COME OUT A GOOD MILE FROM MY POINT! YEAH, I FOXED THE BATMAN, AN' NO KIDDIN'! NO WAY FOR HIM TO GRAB ME NOW...

AS I WAS SAYING, BIGGER...
GAKK!
...YOUR FORMER LEADER HAS DONE IN THREE OF YOUR ASSOCIATES, AND I HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE YOU'RE NEXT ON HIS LIST OF VICTIMS!
I'M ASKING YOU TO PUT YOURSELF IN PROTECTIVE CUSTODY!
S-SURE...
...ANYTHING YOU SAY! ONLY HOW'S ABOUT WE STOP BY MY GCOW SO'S I CAN GET MY TOOTHBRUSH?
A REASONABLE REQUEST! LEAD ON!
HEY...WELL, I DON'T WANNA SEEM CHICKEN OR NOTHIN'... BUT YOU MIND GOIN' IN AHEAD OF ME?
ANOTHER REASONABLE REQUEST! OKAY... FOLLOW ME!
UNNGH!
BONK
OKAY, BIGGER! COAST IS CLEAR!
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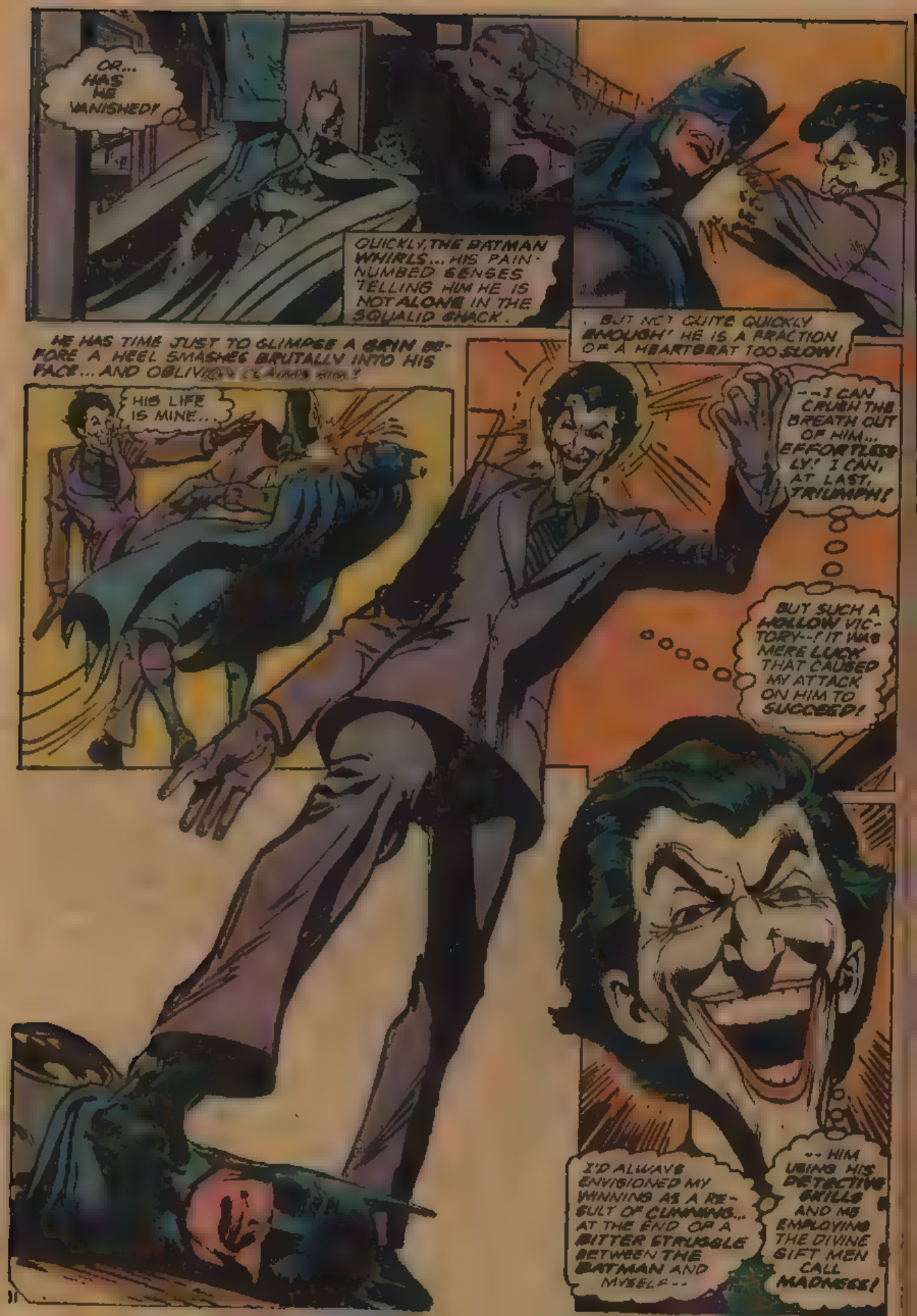
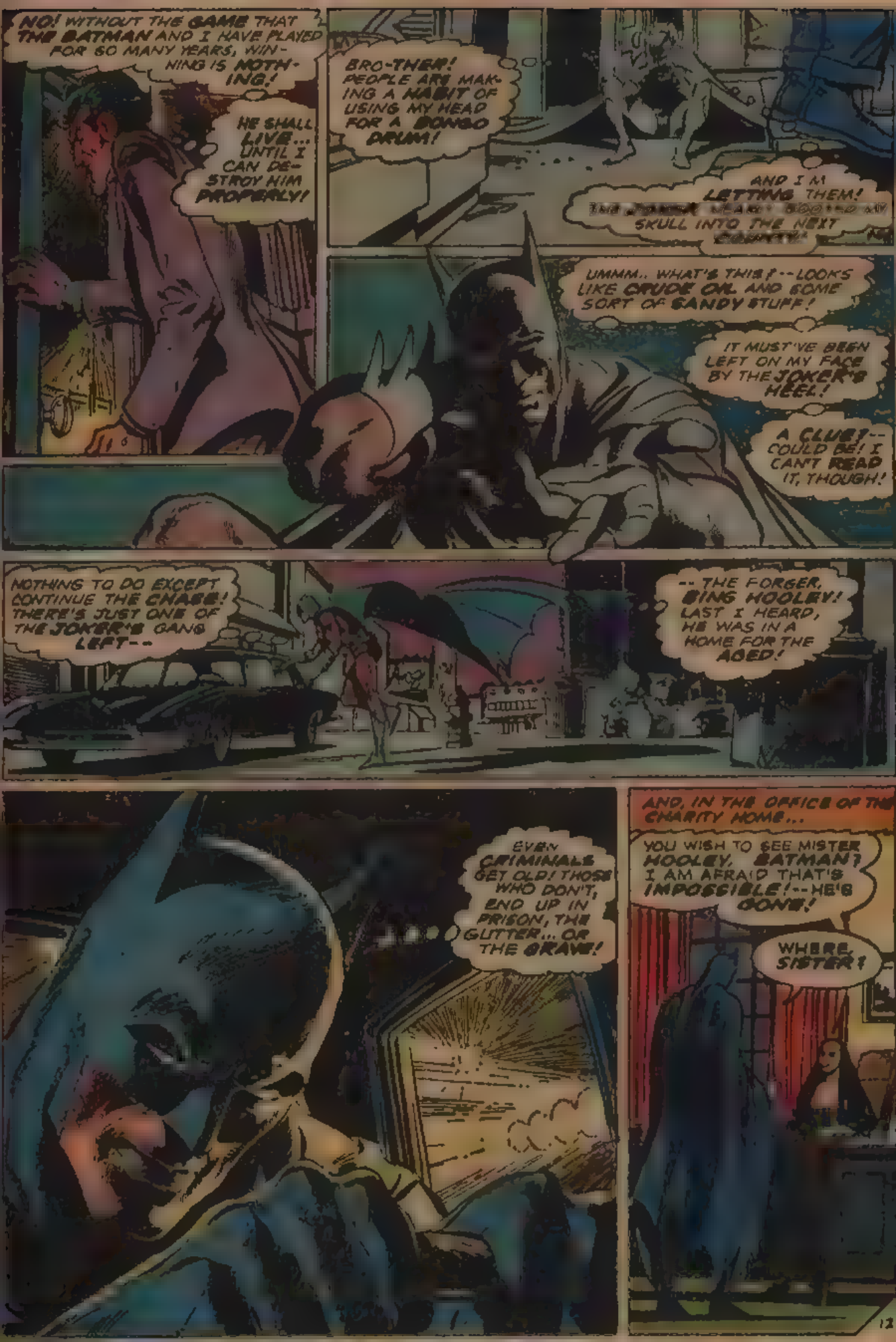
BOY! WHAT KINDA DUMMY DOES HE TAKE ME FOR --! EXPECTIN' ME TO BUY THAT JOKER YARN!
I KNOW ALL HE WANTS IS TO PIN THAT MUGGING ON ME!
MY LOVE-TAP OUGHTTA KEEP HIM DREAMIN' LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO GET MY TOOTH-BRUSH, MY GUN, AN' MY KNIFE ... I'M HIGH-BALLIN' IT OUTA TOWN!
IN A COUPLE OF MINUTES, MY TROUBLES WILL BE OVER!
SECONDS LATER
THE IDIOT--I'M THE ONLY THING BETWEEN HIM AND A COFFIN, AND HE KAYOES
I SHOULD REST A [redacted] BLOW ON THE SKULL MADE SCRAMBLED EGGS OF MY BRAINS!
I DIDN'T THINK HE'D BE SO STUPID!
TOO LATE--! THE JOKER'S BEATEN ME AGAIN!-- HE'S LIKE A ONE-MAN PLAGUE!
I'M GROGGY...BUT I FIGURE [redacted] IN DANGER!
HE COMES... KILLS... AND VANISHES!


OR... HAS HE VANISHED!
QUICKLY, THE BATMAN WHIRLS... HIS PAIN-NUMBED SENSES TELLING HIM HE IS NOT ALONE IN THE SQUALID SHACK.
HE HAS TIME JUST TO GLIMPSE A GRIN BEFORE A HEEL SMASHES BRUTALLY INTO HIS FACE... AND OBLIVION CLAIMS HIM!
. BUT NOT QUITE QUICKLY ENOUGH! HE IS A FRACTION OF A HEARTBEAT TOO SLOW!
HIS LIFE IS MINE...
--I CAN CRUSH THE BREATH OUT OF HIM... EFFORTLESSLY! I CAN, AT LAST, TRIUMPH!
BUT SUCH A HOLLOW VICTORY--! IT WAS MERE LUCK THAT CAUSED MY ATTACK ON HIM TO SUCCEED!
I'D ALWAYS ENVISIONED MY WINNING AS A RESULT OF CUNNING... AT THE END OF A BITTER STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE BATMAN AND MYSELF--
-- HIM USING HIS DETECTIVE SKILLS AND ME EMPLOYING THE DIVINE GIFT MEN CALL MADNESS!


NO! WITHOUT THE GAME THAT THE BATMAN AND I HAVE PLAYED FOR SO MANY YEARS, WINNING IS NOTHING!
HE SHALL LIVE... UNTIL I CAN DESTROY HIM PROPERLY!
BRO-THER! PEOPLE ARE MAKING A HABIT OF USING MY HEAD FOR A BONGO DRUM!
AND I'M LETTING THEM!
SKULL INTO THE NEXT
UMMM.. WHAT'S THIS? --LOOKS LIKE CRUDE OIL AND SOME SORT OF SANDY STUFF!
IT MUST'VE BEEN LEFT ON MY FACE BY THE JOKER'S HEEL!
A CLUE? -- COULD BE! I CAN'T READ IT, THOUGH!
NOTHING TO DO EXCEPT CONTINUE THE CHASE! THERE'S JUST ONE OF THE JOKER'S GANG LEFT--
-- THE FORGER, BING HOOLEY! LAST I HEARD, HE WAS IN A HOME FOR THE AGED!
EVEN CRIMINALS GET OLD! THOSE WHO DON'T, END UP IN PRISON, THE GUTTER... OR THE GRAVE!
AND, IN THE OFFICE OF THE CHARITY HOME...
YOU WISH TO SEE MISTER HOOLEY, BATMAN? I AM AFRAID THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! -- HE'S GONE!
WHERE, SISTER?

HE LEFT THIS [illegible] A DEAR FRIEND OF HIS... A MISTER GENESIUS!
SO NICE OF MISTER GENESIUS TO CARE FOR THE ELDERLY, DON'T YOU AGREE?
I'M AFRAID NOT, SISTER--
--YOU'LL RECALL THAT SAINT GENESIUS IS THE PATRON SAINT OF ACTORS AND COMEDIANS... JOKERS!
THE JOKER KIDNAPED HOOLEY EARLY-- BEFORE HE COMMITTED THE REST OF THE MURDERS!
SO HE HAS TO HAVE HOOLEY HIDDEN... SOMEWHERE! ON SOME RAIN-SLICK STREET IN GOTHAM, THE JOKER HAS A HIDE-OUT...
WA-A-AIT! RAIN-SLICK... OF COURSE! IF I HADN'T BEEN SO BUSY CHASING AROUND, I'D HAVE SEEN THE OBVIOUS--
--AT LEAST WHEN I WIPED THE GOO OFF MY FACE!
ONE AREA WHERE THE JOKER COULD HAVE PICKED UP THAT PARTICULAR MIXTURE-- CRUDE PETROLEUM AND SAND--
--AND IT'S A SPOT MADE TO ORDER FOR HIM! LONELY... ISOLATED-- PERFECT!
I CAN BE THERE IN AN HOUR-- AND I WILL BE!
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING
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CONTAMINATED BEACH!
KEEP OUT
WHICH MEANS THE BEACHES ARE FULL OF IT. . AND ANYONE WALKING ON THE BEACH WOULD HAVE SAND AND OIL ON HIS SHOES!-- AS THE JOKER D.D!
YESTERDAY, A SHIP --A TANKER-- RAN AGROUND JUST OFF GOTHAM ISLAND ... DUMPING HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF [illegible] OF CRUDE OIL INTO THE SEA!
THIS STORM HAS PREVENTED ANY CLEAN-UP EFFORT--
..AND THE WIND HAS BEEN PUSHING THE FOULED WATER TOWARD THE MAINLAND!
A TINGLING AT THE BASE OF MY NECK... A FEELING OF DANGER!
--EXACTLY WHAT I WANT!
LOGICALLY, HE'D HIDE HERE . . IN THE AQUARIUM BUILDING THE GOVERNMENT CLOSED LAST MONTH!
YES, YES... YES! ALL THE WHILE I WAS BEHIND BARS, I MISSED [illegible] CRASHES!
I DREAMED OF... HUMILIATING YOU-- IN A [illegible] MORBUS WAY!
WITH NO EFFORT AT STEALTH, THE BATMAN [illegible] ENTERS THE BUILDING AND IS GREETED BY A PIERCINGLY CHILLING VOICE...
OH, BATMAN! YOU FOUND ME! [illegible] WOULD... AND I'M GLAD!
ANY PARTICULAR REASON, JOKER?
HOW DOES A SHARK EAT IF HE LOSES HIS TEETH? A SHARK CANNOT LOSE HIS TEETH BECAUSE [illegible] TEETH ARE BROKEN OFF NEW ONES ROTATE AND GROW
CARE TO BEGIN?

YES, YES,..YES! TRY THIS!
A LAUGHING-GAS GRENADE? JOKER, YOU DISAPPOINT ME!
DID YOU EXPECT ME TO EXPECT THAT PLOY! NATURALLY, I CAME PREPARED!
YOUR CHEMICAL ANTIDOTE? HOW WELL I RECALL THE TIME YOU INVENTED IT! OHHH... THIS IS FUN!
IN THE EXHIBITION HALL, I HAVE A SURPRISE FOR YOU! A DELIGHT I'VE NEVER USED
I CAN HARDLY WAIT!
DON'T SINK YOUR FIST INTO ME JUST YET, BATMAN! NOT TILL YOU SEE THE SURPRISE I PROMISED!
NOTICE I'M HOLDING A HANDLE ATTACHED TO A CHAIN--
AT THE OTHER END IS A PLATFORM, AND MY OLD ASSOCIATE HOOLEY! I YANK THE CHAIN AND HOOLEY FALLS INTO THE GLASS TANK BELOW!
BUT DON'T WORRY! I'M NOT MEAN! HE WON'T DROWN--
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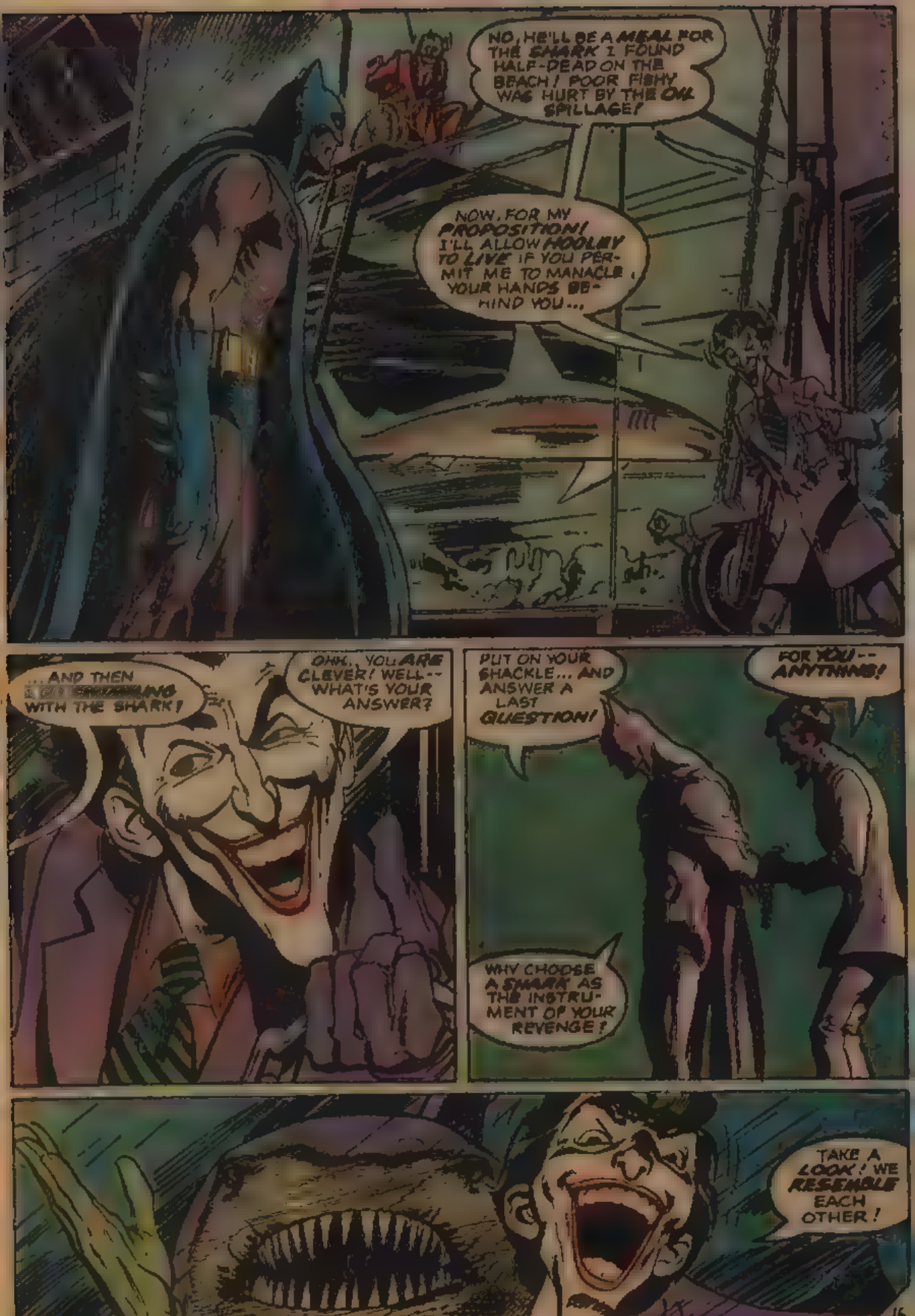
NO, HE'LL BE A MEAL FOR THE SHARK I FOUND HALF-DEAD ON THE BEACH! POOR FISHY WAS HURT BY THE OIL SPILLAGE!
NOW, FOR MY PROPOSITION! I'LL ALLOW HOOLEY TO LIVE IF YOU PERMIT ME TO MANACLE YOUR HANDS BEHIND YOU...
...AND THEN I'LL BE SWIMMING WITH THE SHARK!
OHH, YOU ARE CLEVER! WELL-- WHAT'S YOUR ANSWER?
PUT ON YOUR SHACKLE... AND ANSWER A LAST QUESTION!
FOR YOU-- ANYTHING!
WHY CHOOSE A SHARK AS THE INSTRUMENT OF YOUR REVENGE?
TAKE A LOOK! WE RESEMBLE EACH OTHER!

JOKER--YOU REALIZE YOU'RE UTTERLY..HOPELESSLY...INSANE!
IT'S MY MOST CHARMING TRAIT!
BYE-BYE, BATMAN! HAVE A NICE DINNER... I MEAN--BE A NICE DINNER!
HA HA HA HA
FOR DESSERT, SHARKY CAN HAVE HOOLEY!
HAHAHAHA
YOU... PROMISED--
I'M A NOTORIOUS LIAR!
TA-TA, ALL!
HAHAHAH

I'VE NEVER HAD TO FIGHT SO UNPREPARED! I'VE NEVER MET A SEA PREDATOR IN HIS OWN ELEMENT!
STILL, THERE MAY BE A WORKABLE MANEUVER--
...USE THE CHAINLINKS TO PUT ITS TEETH OUT OF COMMISSION AND--
--HEAVE! HEAVE!! ...MAYBE SNAP ITS SPINE...OR SOMETHING!
BREAK, BLAST YOU!-- BREAK!!

SUDDENLY, THE SHARK SHUDDERS... AND SLOWLY SINKS!
GOT THE SHACKLES OFF, TOO! THAT TOOK ABOUT TWENTY SECONDS ... SECONDS HOOLEY CAN'T SPARE! GOT TO GET HIM TO AIR--!
GLASS IS TOO SMOOTH TO CLIMB...
... AND TOO THICK TO BREAK WITH MY BARE HANDS! --NEED A TOOL...
...AND THERE IT IS!
HOOLEY'S "WHEEL-" CHAIR... GOOD, STURDY STEEL FRAME -- AND HEAVY! NOT THE BEST THING.
BUT THE ONE I HAVE!
ANOTHER TWENTY SECONDS GONE! HOOLEY'S PROBABLY ALREADY STOPPED BREATHING!
HE HAS A CHANCE ...WITH ARTIFICIAL RESPIRATION--PROVIDED I GIVE IT FAST!
USING EVERY SCINTILLA OF THE POWER LOCKED IN HIS INCREDIBLE FRAME, STRAINING TO OVERCOME WATER-RESISTANCE, THE BATMAN SMASHES THE CHAIR FORWARD ... AGAIN -- AND AGAIN..!

KA-WOOSH
HE'S STRONGER THAN I GUESSED! HE'S BREATHING... HE'LL BE OKAY!...
...WHICH LEAVES ME FREE TO CONCENTRATE ON...
-- THE JOKER!
OHHH... BATMAN! I'VE SEEN YOU ANGRY LIKE THIS--OFTEN! NOBODY ALIVE CAN BEAT YOU WHEN THE ANGER IS UPON YOU!
YOU'LL GET NO BATTLE FROM ME! I MAY BE INSANE... BUT I'M NOT CRAZY!
SO I'LL RUN AWAY-- AND LIVE TO PUT EGG ON YOUR FACE ANOTHER DAY!
OUTSIDE, THERE IS PAWN... AND DESPERATION...
HE HASN'T LOST ANY OF HIS CUNNING! HE HAS A GETAWAY CAR ...WITH BALLOON TIRES FOR RIDING ON SAND!
HE REACHES IT AND... HE'S GONE!

THE NIGHT HAS TAKEN ITS TOLL ON ME... THE BLOWS TO THE HEAD... THE BATTLE IN THE AQUARIUM--
I CAN'T GET UP TO FULL SPEED--
--AND HE HAS A BIG START!
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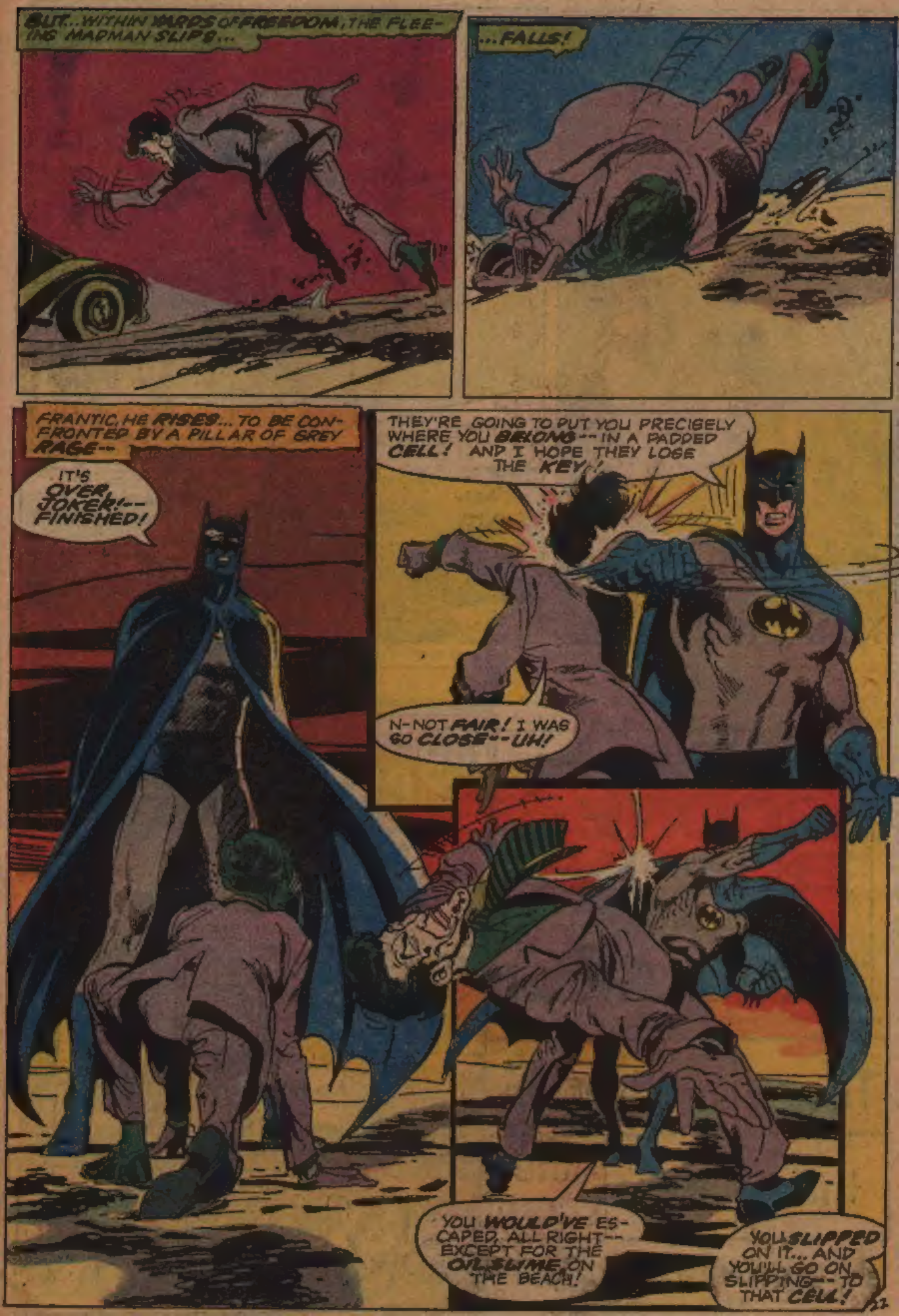
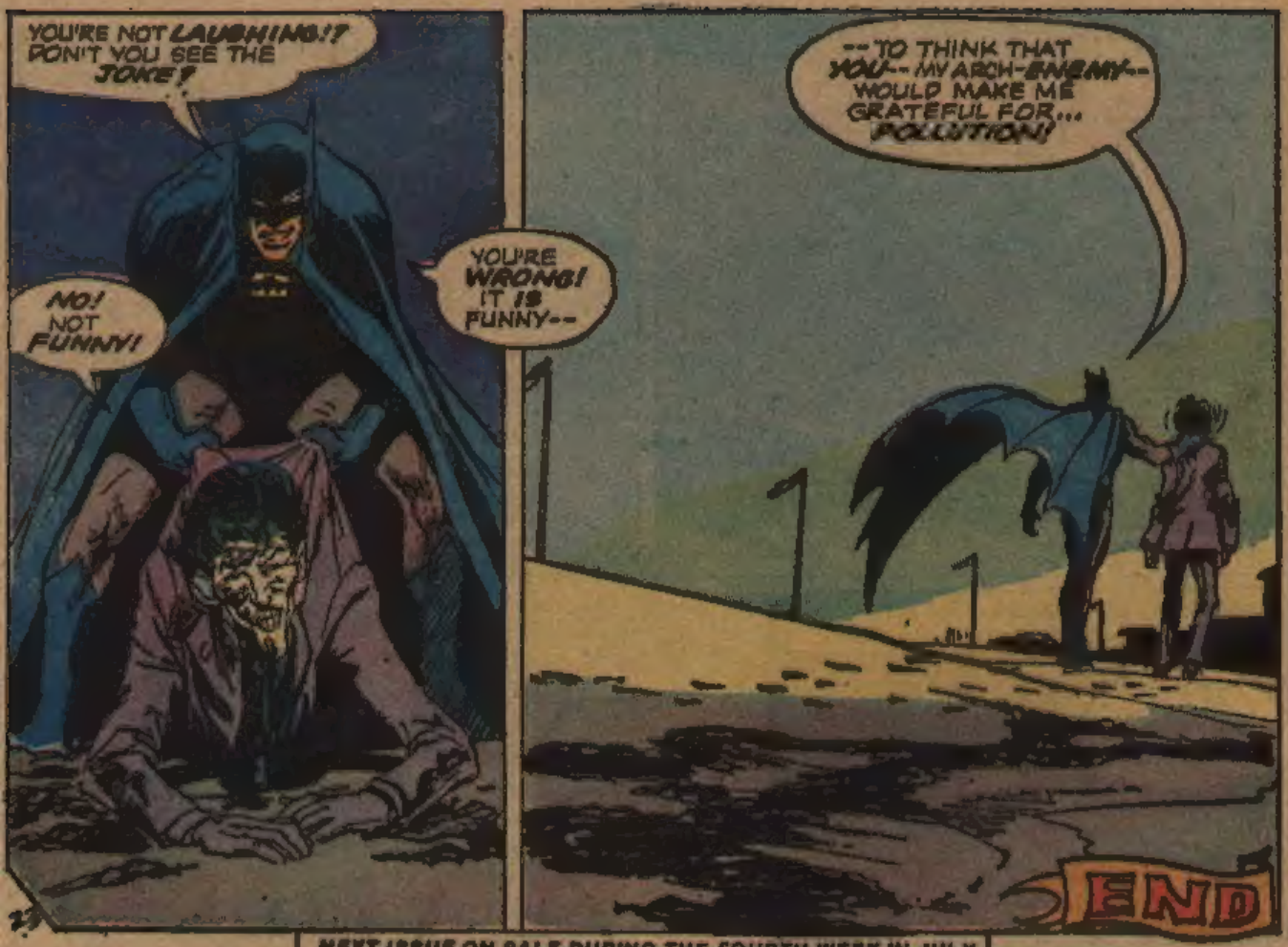

BUT...WITHIN YARDS OF FREEDOM, THE FLEEING MADMAN SLIPS...
...FALLS!
FRANTIC, HE RISES... TO BE CONFRONTED BY A PILLAR OF GREY RAGE--
IT'S OVER, JOKER!--FINISHED!
THEY'RE GOING TO PUT YOU PRECISELY WHERE YOU BELONG--IN A PADDED CELL! AND I HOPE THEY LOSE THE KEY!
N-NOT FAIR! I WAS SO CLOSE--UH!
YOU WOULD'VE ESCAPED, ALL RIGHT--EXCEPT FOR THE OIL SLIME ON THE BEACH!
YOU SLIPPED ON IT... AND YOU'LL GO ON SLIPPING--TO THAT CELL!


YOU'RE NOT LAUGHING!? DON'T YOU SEE THE JOKE?
NO! NOT FUNNY!
YOU'RE WRONG! IT IS FUNNY--
--TO THINK THAT YOU-- MY ARCH-ENEMY-- WOULD MAKE ME GRATEFUL FOR... POLLUTION!
END

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE DURING THE FOURTH WEEK IN JULY

THE SCORE-BOARDS DON'T TELL ALL!

There's	much	more
than	just	the score!

WATCH FOR IT